AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE AIR UNIVERSITY

THE USAF CHAPLAIN CORPS 2016 A ROADMAP TO THE FUTURE

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A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF OPERATIONAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

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Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

March 2016

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Biography

Chaplain, Major Matthew F. Boyd is a student assigned to the Air Command and Staff
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Abstract

The United States Air Force (USAF) faces tremendous leadership challenges as it enters its 25th year of continuous combat operations. Manning shortfalls, reduced budgets and a myriad of other complex challenges have increased the stress placed upon Air Force leaders and followers alike. While caring for Airmen and their families the USAF Chaplain Corps has been navigating leadership challenges as well. These challenges have compromised the organizational health of the Chaplain Corps. This lack of health degrades leadership performance, development and other areas of mission accomplishment. Instead of creating new programs, the Chaplain Corps needs to implement systemic processes that increase the health of the organization. By 2036, the Chaplain Corps should exemplify a healthy organizational construct. The Corps' hallmarks will be cooperation, trust, openness and ministry innovation. Leadership failures, due to destructive leaders, will be rare and we will have a stronger Chaplain Corps. To get there it will take a Corps-wide commitment to a process of healthy change. A new process designed to measure organizational health should be implemented, followed by interventions designed to improve areas where weak health is identified. In addition, outdated processes that support organizational silos will need to be discontinued. We owe it to the Air Force and next generation of chaplains to provide a healthy culture devoid of destructive behavior, where the mission can flourish.

The United States Air Force (USAF) faces tremendous leadership challenges as it enters its 25th year of continuous combat operations. In addition, manning shortfalls, reduced budgets and a myriad of other complex challenges have increased the stress placed upon Air Force leaders and followers alike. The USAF Chaplain Corps is navigating its share of leadership challenges as well. These challenges have compromised the organizational health of the Chaplain Corps. This lack of health degrades leadership performance, development and other areas of mission accomplishment. Instead of creating new programs, the Chaplain Corps should implement systemic processes that increase the health of the organization. This study focuses on the subject of leadership within the USAF Chaplain Corps, highlighting where we are today, primarily based upon indicators derived from the 2015 Chaplain Corps Survey, where we need to be in 2036 and what processes and actions will get us from here to there.

Where we are today

Today, many modern scholars and military leaders describe the world as VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous).³ Recognizing this VUCA environment is an essential starting point to move forward in effectively addressing current leadership challenges. These challenges require the Chaplain Corps to adapt its processes so it may continue to effectively accomplish its mission. Both leaders and followers must understand and accept that the path to effective adaptation is always fraught with the possibility of failure until the optimal solution to a given challenge is discovered.⁴

Chaplain Corps leadership has engaged in this task and embraced the need to adapt, in order to overcome numerous Corps-wide challenges.⁵ In October 2015, Headquarters Air Force

Chaplain Corps (AF/HC) sought the ground-level truth concerning the state of the organization by surveying the entire Chaplain Corps. The survey resulted in a gold mine of relevant data regarding current issues and perceptions.

Survey results indicate Chaplain Corps members at all levels are passionate about serving Airmen and providing for their right to the free exercise of religion. A culture of humble service prevails in spite of a myriad of challenges. However, there are also indications of an identity crisis within the Chaplain Corps. This is not a new struggle. In 1970, USAF Chaplain, Lt Col Charles T. Reese wrote, "There is a kind of collective identity crisis taking place. The doctor, the lawyer, the scientist, the politician, the general, along with the chaplain, is not only asking, "Who am I?" but also "What is my purpose?" The chaplain specifically is asking, "What is my ministry?" Reese challenges the Chaplain Corps of the early 1970's with the following words, "if we refuse to change with the times, a tremendous gap will develop."

After processing the 2015 survey data AF/HC swiftly released a strategic message responding to Corps-wide confusion that had developed, with the promise of concrete action on the way. This message clearly reaffirmed the chaplain's identity as a guardian of religious freedom who inspires spiritual wholeness by caring for Airmen and families. This message was written in a tone of appreciation and care, emphasizing the Chaplain Corps mission to "prepare spiritually fit Airmen to fly, fight, and win."

The next critical step for AF/HC to take is the alignment of what we do with who we are. The survey results indicate that confusion within the Chaplain Corps was primarily caused by an AF/HC mandated "Wildly Important Goal" (WIG),¹⁰ which required all chapel teams to prioritize unit engagement by spending forty-five percent of their time in unit ministry.¹¹

Confusion below the strategic level as to why we were making this shift in resources resulted in a reduction in the systemic health of the Chaplain Corps. The majority of survey respondents perceived AF/HC was telling them that unit engagement was more important than worship, liturgies and rites and even more important than providing for the religious freedom of Airmen.¹² This perception was further reinforced with a follow-up requirement to close the main chapel center twenty-five percent of the day at Air Force installations worldwide.

These policies were intended to bring about a Corps-wide realignment of chapel resources focused toward the warfighter. However, decision makers did not foresee the negative second and third-order effects this policy change would create. In addition, the majority of survey respondents indicate the WIG at its current level is unachievable with current manning and demoralizes chapel staffs. ¹³ A decentralized process whereby individual wing chapels determine goals in line with broad Chaplain Corps strategy, taking in account the unique challenges, needs and mission of the local installation, should be implemented as soon as possible. This would alleviate the pressure chapel's feel from above, enhance morale and enable wing chaplains to optimize their resources. Unfortunately, the policies that brought about these issues are difficult to change and will take additional time to adjust or remove. ¹⁴

The Survey also indicates that there is a prevalent perception that unhealthy leadership within the Chaplain Corps is tolerated and poor leaders are not held accountable for leadership failures. Furthermore, there is a shared opinion that there are far too many leadership failures. Survey results also point to a strong desire for greater emphasis on increased training opportunities and greater intentionality in training leaders earlier in their career. The survey results also point to a strong desire for greater emphasis on increased training opportunities and greater intentionality in training leaders earlier in their career.

The perception that there are too many leadership failures is especially concerning. In 2013 the Air Force Chaplain Corps College (AFCCC) created a new course for mid-level captain chaplains called the Chaplain Spiritual Leadership Course (CSLC) specifically designed to increase leadership skills before chaplains are placed in a supervisory role. Post course surveys indicated the vast majority of attendees found this course beneficial. There is no process in place for tracking whether these chaplains are putting this leadership training into practice or if they are better prepared to lead than their predecessors.

For a deeper assessment of where the Chaplain Corps is today we can compare the survey data against Patrick Lencioni's indicators of a healthy organization found in his book *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything in Business*. Lencioni points out that healthy organizations actively minimize levels of confusion and politics, have high levels of productivity and morale, and very low turnover of *desirable* (emphasis added) employees. He emphasizes healthy organizations intentionally manage these factors. ¹⁸

Two Requirements for Success

<u>Smart</u>	<u>Healthy</u>
• Strategy	• Minimal Politics
 Marketing 	 Minimal Confusion
• Finance	 High Morale
• Technology	High Productivity
	• Low Turnover

Table 1. Two Requirements for Success. (Adapted from Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (San Francisco, CA:Jossey-Bass), 2012: 6.)

In Table 1, Lencioni points out the topics under "Smart" are where most organizations like to focus. He attributes this to the fact that those categories are data driven, objective,

measurable and comfortable. The attributes under the "Healthy" column are more difficult to measure and are often emotionally charged when addressed in a less than healthy organization. He goes on to point out that in today's world being excellent in the "Smart" category is the minimum standard to "play the game." This is especially true in today's Air Force where "Excellence in all we do," is our minimum standard.

Survey results indicate there is much room for improvement within the Chaplain Corps in the "Healthy" column. First, in the category of "Minimal Politics" Survey responses point to a perception within the Chaplain Corps that politics are not at a minimum. Of note, in the section titled "Personnel Issues," sixty-four survey respondents cited leadership issues as a concern inside the Chaplain Corps. The survey summary highlighted the perception that leaders are not held accountable when they fail. In addition, the summary underscored the perception of a "good old boy system" in regard to chaplain recruiting, promotions and assignments.²⁰

In the second category of "Minimal Confusion," the survey indicated just the opposite and highlighted a significant amount of organizational confusion. An overriding theme that cascades through every section of the survey summary is a cry for clarity from the field.²¹ As mentioned earlier in this study, AF/HC has intentionally moved forward to focus on meeting this need for clarity and has made great strides in a relatively short period of time. Once concrete policy actions are taken, both trust in leadership, and clarity will continue to increase.

The Survey also indicates a significant struggle in the third category of "High Morale."

The survey summary describes the situation as, "Our Corps is fatigued," exhausted from attempting to do everything that is required with inadequate manning, resources and everincreasing requirements. Additionally, it is highly likely survey respondents who indicated they

have destructive or uncaring leaders also have very low morale. This research also points to a perception that the strategic and operational levels of the Chaplain Corps often hinder and constrain rather than help ministry at the tactical level. This is a significant detractor to morale. This perception may be the result of ever increasing requirements and higher headquarters taskers that are added to wing level requirements. In a discussion with the author, one wing chaplain reported, "I am seriously considering retiring (before high year of tenure)." The wing chaplain attributed this to mental and emotional exhaustion resulting from the enormous administrative workload. In addition, as stated at the outset of this paper, twenty-four plus years of constant combat operations have taken their toll on the Chaplain Corps. Secondary trauma is also common among caregivers who walk with people during their darkest times.

The fourth category, "high productivity," was not measured in the Chaplain Corps Survey. However, in the Air Force as a whole, we no longer have room for an unproductive organization. Knowing this fact and how passionate Chaplain Corps personnel are about their calling to serve, it has been my observation that Air Force Chapel Teams find a way to overcome their immediate obstacles and be productive. Unfortunately, in challenging times, effective ministry is often accomplished at the expense of self-care and family.

Finally, the last indicator of organizational health, "low turnover among good employees," was also not measured in the survey. Lencioni intentionally qualifies this indicator with the word "good." ²⁴ Over the years the Chaplain Corps has maintained excellent retention statistics. But there is no mechanism in place to determine whether we are retaining good chaplains. ²⁵ Nor have we clearly defined what a good chaplain looks like. Due to the spiritual and personal nature of the work chaplains do, the definition of good must far exceed mere numerical efficiency and quantifiable results.

The military is no stranger to poor leadership. In a recent study surveying Army War College students, George E. Reed found 100 percent of the joint service O-5 and O-6 respondents experienced emotionally unhealthy or destructive leadership at some point in their career. However, unlike the civilian sector, this did not translate into respondents wanting to leave the military. Reed points out that the people surveyed are those who survived and his survey did not attempt to capture whether respondents observed "good employees" that separated from the military due to unhealthy leadership. It follows that good employee retention may not be a valid indicator in the military context. In addition, Chaplain Corps members may value factors like extremely good health care benefits, better pay compared to the civilian sector, and a sense of calling by God to serve in spite of an unhealthy work environment, more than their own personal distress. This research indicates more work should be done to bring clarity to this area.

The process of assessing the organizational health of the Chaplain Corps based on the Survey data helps us identify key focus areas. AF/HC is currently well on their way in addressing many of the issues identified here. Purposely flattening strategic communication has significantly improved the ability of AF/HC to clearly and quickly respond to issues with a process that reaches the maximum number of personnel. However, institutional transformation takes considerable time and effort.²⁹ Thus, the senior leaders of the Chaplain Corps have a challenging task as they strive to lead the Chaplain Corps into greater organizational health.

Where do we need to be in 2036 and how do we get there?

As we look to the future I believe we must base our changes and our concepts on a new appreciation for the nature of human beings. And we must develop far greater understanding of the central—indeed critical—role played by leadership. We also must appreciate far more than we do today how fundamentally our organizational approaches influence the proper functioning of leadership; specifically how some approaches facilitate it and others stifle it.

-Gen W. L. Creech Concepts for Air Force Leadership AU-24

The following suggestions will aid in the process of discovering a way forward that will increase the organizational health of the Chaplain Corps. The USAF Chaplain Corps of 2036 will need to exemplify what it means to have a healthy organizational culture that facilitates synergy, trust and agility. This Chaplain Corps of the future will be one where failures by destructive leaders are rare.

Organizationally healthy

Just as the commander looks to the Judge Advocate General for sound legal advice, he or she looks to the chaplain for sound advice on how to better care for his or her Airmen. In addition to religious issues, JP 1-05, *Religious Affairs in Joint Operations*, states that chaplains advise commanders and staff on "morale and personnel issues." Chaplains are not experts in the critical skillset of improving morale or resolving personnel issues. Given the rise in Chaplain leadership failures at the wing level it follows some wing chaplains may be advising commanders to do what I say, not what I do.³¹

Given this significant capability gap, measures should be taken to create a process for leadership development that encompasses preparing chaplains to master this competency. This process should include expansion of the AFCCC curriculum to include the education of chaplains in the academic study and application of organizational health in the work place. One possibility is creating online courses and or stand-alone courses that can be facilitated at the wing level. In addition, the priority of organizational health must be operationalized and integrated into Chaplain Corps culture. By doing so, we take an intentional step toward making "Care for the Caregiver" a top priority, creating clarity in why this is being done. There are several ways we can effectively operationalize this concept.

Annually measuring the health of the Chaplain Corps at all levels against indicators like those Lencioni proposes gives us measurable goals for which to aspire.³⁴ Once issues are identified, interventions can be tailored to improve specific indicators. Modeling this process at the strategic and operational level increases transparency and inspires the tactical level to follow suit. In addition, when this process is accomplished at the tactical level it empowers installation Senior Religious Support Teams (SrRSTs) to discover and resolve their problems.

Second, adding the question, "Does this decision improve the health of the system?" into the strategic decision making process will increase the likelihood of avoiding counterproductive second and third order effects like those that occurred with the application of the WIG.³⁵

Thinking through strategic decisions with specific criteria for a healthy organization in mind provides decision makers greater clarity regarding the possible risks to organizational health.

This process is dependent on decision makers at the strategic level having an unfiltered feedback loop to and from the tactical level.³⁶ Through intentional action AF/HC recently received unfiltered feedback from the entire Corps through the use of the 2015 Chaplain Corps Survey.

The loop was completed when Air Staff sent out a strategic response to the field. The future challenge will be to keep the feedback loop going. Consistently soliciting and receiving quality, unfiltered feedback, is essential in acquiring accurate data through this process.³⁷

The goal, "Provide a healthy organization for Chaplain Corps Personnel to serve in," should be adopted as an objective and placed under the Chaplain Corps strategic priority "Enhance our care for Chaplain Corps caregivers." Leaders create and are responsible for the environment where their people serve. Bob Chapman, in his book *Everybody Matters: The Extraordinary Power of Caring for Your People like Family*, reports how his company succeeded in creating a culture almost completely devoid of fear, gossip, and politics." He asserts that this was accomplished by living out their number one priority; treating everyone in the organization like a caring family, and entrenching this culture by applying Lean⁴¹ principles that focus on people rather than numbers or efficiency. More work needs to be done clearly defining what it means for the Chaplain Corps to be healthy and holding leaders accountable for creating and maintaining an organizationally healthy culture across the functional enterprise. As

These actions would support the education wing chaplains currently receive at the Wing Chaplain Course (WCC). In the 10-day WCC, students are immersed in cutting edge leadership and team building concepts. Course instructors utilize methods like "scenario-based questions" and "context-aligned simulations" that current research indicates, will enhance retention of the information taught in the classroom. ⁴⁴ However, this solitary course of study is not sufficient to instill a culture that prioritizes organizational health. ⁴⁵ In order for lasting and effective cultural change to occur alignment with and support of this training must occur at the strategic, operational and tactical levels of the organization. ⁴⁶

An open system that facilitates synergy, trust and agility

In an attempt to prepare for the force of the future, the USAF is on a path of system transformation. Some aspects of this transformation are increasing synergy, agility and trust in the system. The USAF has identified that silos are significantly hindering progress in this direction. In organizations a silo is defined as "a group of employees that tend to work as autonomous units within an organization. They show a reluctance to integrate their efforts with employees in other functions of the organization." A "stay in your lane" warning is often issued to maintain the integrity of these silos. Silos prevent cross flow of information and collaboration. Within the Chaplain Corps these barriers have resulted in reduced effectiveness and distrust. The AFCCC is effectively an autonomous unit that has processes in place that hold tightly to information and resist the influence from other areas of the Chaplain Corps. Course content and syllabus are available for review to only a select few outside the AFCCC. As courses evolve, chaplains in the operational world are not privy to the updated material. This results in the majority of Chaplain Corps personnel being ignorant on what is currently being taught at each level of education.

After an extensive review of the CSLC it was discovered that wing chaplains are not informed regarding the specifics of what their captain chaplains are being taught in this course. Students are encouraged to share what they learned in the course with their leadership when they return to home station. However, there is no formal feedback provided to supervisors in areas the chaplain student should work on to increase his or her leadership skills. In addition, the course curriculum is not available for supervisors or wing chaplains to review unless the student voluntarily shares it. The ability to review the CSLC curriculum alone would increase the supervisor's awareness of goals and learning objectives and help him or her to be a better

mentor.⁵¹ These barriers should be broken down and new processes that create synergy and increase the overall effectiveness of supervisors, wing chaplains and AFCCC instructors should be put in place.⁵²

Lt Gen Gina Grosso, AF/A1, is currently attempting to remove silos in the USAF personnel system. A1 is focused on breaking down the barriers, "rulesets" and "policies," that hinder the Air Force from being more agile in the use of the expertise and talent of our Airmen. General Grosso highlights how she and her team filter decisions regarding new programs and policies through the question "Are we helping the Air Force and the human resource system become more agile?" Current initiatives like this prove that the Air Force is committed to breaking down these barriers.

In addition, mentoring, education and training of Chaplain Corps personnel would be significantly enhanced if, minus question and answers at the end, AFCCC lectures were recorded and posted on the Chaplain Corps secure website. After a review of the Basic Chaplain Course (BCC), Deputy Wing Chaplain Course (DWCC) and the WCC it is evident to this researcher the content in these courses would be valuable tools to enhance the wing chaplain's capability to effectively educate and mentor his or her staff. This would also enhance the learning of those who attend these courses in person. The AFCCC could add a document with talking points for chapel staffs to discuss after viewing the class. A process which includes a feedback loop where the AFCCC receives suggestions for improvements from base chapel teams would also enhance the process of course material creation. There is currently no Air University policy forbidding the recording and posting of classes to a government website and is, in fact, encouraged. For example, Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) records most of their lectures and posts them

on a shared drive for students to download, review and keep. This results in enhanced learning for ACSC students who take advantage of this tool.⁵⁴

Chaplain Corps silos also enhance the perception of a "good old boy" system where only a select few are permitted to contribute to the betterment of the whole. Increasing transparency, openness to feedback and where possible revealing why and how decisions are made would go a long way in addressing this perception. In addition, this research indicates where legal or confidentiality issues do not hinder information flow, AF/HC and organizations such as assignments, recruiting and the AFCCC should deconstruct silos and intentionally pursue processes that enhance information sharing and collaboration. If this recommendation is implemented the organizational health of the Chaplain Corps would significantly increase.⁵⁵

A new process that increases soft leadership skills

The Chaplain Corps has many extremely thoughtful, mature and seasoned leaders. However, this research indicates that the general opinion within the Chaplain Corps is that leadership failures within the Chaplain Corps are at an unacceptable level. Unfortunately, there are no releasable metrics to refer to. The leadership failures of concern here are not general mistakes or temporary errors in judgment made by otherwise constructive leaders. All leaders fail at some point and failure is a necessary part of the process of improvement, adaptation and innovation. The leadership failures at issue within the Chaplain Corps are produced by leaders whose practices are consistently destructive and result in a reduction of organizational health. George Reed, dean of the School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado, asserts, "Dealing with destructive leaders requires individualized responses and the marshaling of effort and resources to address the problem from an organizational level."

After surveying the current AFCCC leadership curriculum and Chaplain Corps guidance on leadership it is evident to this researcher that changes in course content, and the creation of the aforementioned CSLC are attempts to address this problem at the organizational level. ⁵⁹ However, the continuing issue with leadership failures validates the fact that cutting edge training and education alone does not have the capability to successfully bridge the gap between education and practice at home station. As mentioned earlier, the academic setting is limited in what it is able to accomplish. ⁶⁰ This is especially true in regard to courses at the AFCCC due in part to their brevity.

One significant limitation is that lessons learned in the classroom are not reinforced by the organizational culture; "the real world." Internalization of constructive leadership practices are highly unlikely to be adopted by people who have a proclivity to lead in a way that could be described as destructive, without comprehensive cultural and systemic interventions that hold them accountable to follow such practices. This research indicates a new process is needed that provides additional organizational interventions designed to increase accountability and support the soft leadership skills that are characteristic of leaders whose actions increase the health of an organization. Some of these soft leadership skills are empathy, self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and social skills, which enable a leader to create a healthy work environment. 62

This process should be one where soft skills are encouraged, mentored and measured. One method of operationalizing this concept is the application of a 360-degree assessment tool (360) in the leadership development of Chaplain Corps members. A 360 is a tool that measures an individual's leadership performance. In most cases, a 360 includes a self-assessment and solicits feedback from the subject's supervisors, subordinates and peers then compares those results to the subject's own perceptions. A 2015 RAND Corporation study points out, "360s

most commonly measure interpersonal competencies or "soft skills," such as leadership, teamwork, or customer service that are valued aspects of performance in business settings."⁶⁴ These leadership skills are also essential in building a healthy organization. This type of assessment is used widely in the corporate world as a tool for leadership development and assessment of job performance. Of key value to leaders is the insight one gains regarding individual leadership blind spots. The one-on-one feedback received post-assessment highlights how to improve identified growth areas.

Currently, all general officers in the Air Force are required to complete a 360 assessment annually. The Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF) and the Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF) review the results of these 360s.⁶⁵ In a 2014 interview with "Joint Force Quarterly" General Mark Welsh, the current CSAF commented, "When it comes to General Officer behavior including toxic leadership and ethics, last year we instituted a new 360-degree assessment for these commissioned officers.... The goal is to expand this to wing commanders, Senior Executive Service members, and Command Chief Master Sergeants. The idea is to find some of these toxic leader indicators before someone becomes a senior leader in the Air Force."

Following suit, many other military organizations are using 360s with the expressed purpose of intentional leadership development.⁶⁷ USAF Global Strike Command beta tested a 360 assessment program for squadron commanders in January of 2015 resulting in overwhelmingly positive feedback, with several commanders requesting repeat one-on-one feedback so they could track their improvement. In March of 2016, the full program will be rolled out at the Global Strike Command Squadron Commander and Spouse's Course.⁶⁸

At present the Chief and Deputy Chief of Chaplains, like all General Officers in the Air Force, annually complete a mandatory 360. Senior Air Force leaders review the results. In addition, chaplains who attend Air War College (AWC) in residence have the option to participate in an in-depth 360 and personality profile focused on increasing a leader's self-awareness and accelerating development as a strategic leader. Furthermore, chaplains who attend the CSLC are given a tailored 360-feedback from their peers after leadership experiences throughout the week. These chaplains then compare the results to their own self-assessment completed earlier in the week. To my knowledge these are the only opportunities Chaplain Corps members have to utilize a 360 within the military context.

In the first line of the current Wing Chaplain Handbook Ch, Maj Gen Charles C. Baldwin states the job of wing chaplain is the most important job in the Chaplain Service. This statement is still true today and should be expanded to say "the Senior Religious Support Team" is the most important leadership team in the Chaplain Corps. That being said, providing the 360 assessment tool to wing chaplains would seem to be the next logical step. Based upon the positive results from other military organizations, the application of a well-designed 360-degree assessment administered at regular intervals would greatly improve the leadership development process of wing chaplains. The application of a basic 360-degree assessment would be relatively easy since most of the groundwork regarding how to do it has already been accomplished by other military organizations. However, a process that includes a robust 360 tailored to Chaplain Corps personnel and provides quality feedback would require significant support and resources from AF/HC to be effectively operationalized. Of note, the on-line 360 tool Global Strike Command is currently using is free and open to any military organization.

There are however some concerns. The first is whether to use the 360 as an evaluation tool, as is the case with Air Force General Officers, or limit its use to leadership development. The aforementioned 2015 RAND study directed by the US Congress and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) explores this question in depth. The research concludes that there are many concerns with using 360s in conjunction with the current evaluation system and recommends its use as a tool for leadership development alone. All the concerns raised by the RAND study are centered on the perception that using 360s for evaluation purposes could be counterproductive and diminish its value as a leadership development tool. To Chaplain Corps purposes, it is unnecessary to use the 360 for evaluations to attain the desired result to develop leaders who are constructive rather than destructive.

Creation of a 360 focused on developing healthy spiritual leaders complemented by a competency model that measures the essential "hard skills"⁷⁹ one needs to be an effective wing chaplain would be an effective way to create synergy and enhance the leadership education and training provided by the AFCCC.⁸⁰ This would also result in greater clarity as to what leadership practices are expected in the operational realm.⁸¹ A 360 measuring healthy leadership practices could be required at the 6 or 12 month point of a wing chaplain's assignment. Once the organizational health of the Chaplain Corps has increased to an optimal level the functional Major Command (MAJCOM) Chaplain or another leader in the wing chaplain's functional chain should review the 360 results for the express purpose of leadership development.⁸² This intervention would provide ample motivation for a wing chaplain to pursue cultivating the necessary skills to produce a healthy chapel ministry environment.⁸³

This approach gives the MAJCOM Chaplain a valuable tool to better mentor wing chaplains under his or her functional responsibility. This is also an avenue where the MAJCOM

chaplain can assess the morale and general organizational health of a chapel staff. This would result in increased potential to detect and address issues before a leadership failure occurs.

Keeping the results of the 360 assessment inside the Chaplain Corps for the purposes of development takes into consideration the concern that identified growth areas would be used by wing commanders in a wing chaplain performance assessment. However, it should be acceptable for a wing chaplain to share the 360 results with his or her wing commander if so desired. In a culture of transparency and trust this approach would be beneficial. Due to the Chaplain Corps' current low level of organizational health the 360 should be implemented without the MAJCOM Chaplain's ability to review the results until organizational health has significantly increased.

Once organizational health has increased it will be essential to train MAJCOM chaplains concerning how to interpret the 360 assessment and how to design appropriate feedback.

Once the 360 is operationalized at the wing chaplain level it should be expanded to all remaining levels of the Chaplain Corps.⁸⁴ Knowing that everyone in the Chaplain Corps completes a 360 that is intentionally used by functional superiors solely for leadership development will produce greater trust in the system.⁸⁵ In addition, this process should be simultaneously applied to the chaplain assistant career field. This would further solidify the RST concept with the added benefit of SrRSTs growing together as leaders.⁸⁶

The Chaplain Corps is a family, a resilient force standing in the gap for Airmen and their families. The Corps is laser-focused on the mission, "To prepare spiritually fit Airmen to fly, fight, and win." At the same time it has many organizational weak points but in the process of healing. Every year a new crop of passionate young clergy raise their right hand and commit to doing ministry in this VUCA environment. These new chaplains are full of hope and passionate about serving. As one recent graduate of the BCC stated, "If there is ever someone to be a

blessing to, it is these people who are wearing the uniform and put their life on the line to defend our country." We owe it to the new generation of chaplains to provide a healthy culture devoid of fear, gossip, and politics, where they can flourish. To reach this goal it will take systemic processes focused on increasing the health of the organization. It will take a Corps-wide commitment to a process of healthy change. If the recommendations in this study are implemented, the Chaplain Corps of 2036 will exemplify what it means to be a healthy organization. Intentionally aligning all that we do with Care for the Caregiver will multiply the Corps' effectiveness. Its hallmarks will be cooperation, trust, openness and innovation in ministry. Leadership failures due to behavior will be rare and we will have left the Chaplain Corps better than we found it.

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I wish to thank Major Erica Fountain, Ch, Maj Christian Chae, Ch, Capt Matthew Streett, Ch, Maj Marshall MacClellan, Maj Kevin Geoffroy, Maj Greg Little, Dan Nigolian and Summer Boyd for their thoughtful comments and suggestions. All errors found herein are my own.

¹ Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James, General Mark Welsh, Address, "State of the Air Force Press briefing" (Pentagon Briefing Room, 15 January 2015). http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Transcripts/Transcripts-View/Article/606995 Secretary James describes the situation this way, "So, demand for our services is way, way up. But we are meeting those demands today with the smallest Air Force in our history. And when you couple that smaller force against the backdrop of austere budgets, and with the huge demand, what we have is we have a total force that is under significant strain. And of course by total force, I mean our active duty, our National Guard, our reserve, our civilians, and their families."

² HQ USAF/HCX, 2015 Air Force Chaplain Corps Survey Results, 1 December 2015, 1. The USAF Chief of Chaplains distributed the 2015 Chaplain Corps Survey intentionally seeking suggestions from the field on how we can make our Chaplain Corps as effective as possible. The survey was voluntary, anonymous and open to all Active Duty, Guard and Reserve Chaplain Corps members, civilians and contractors. The survey opened on October 15, 2015 and closed on November 15, 2015. There were 1,013 responses to the survey. Those responses were consolidated and categorized by AF/HCX and a summary of the results was distributed to the field on December 1, 2015. Lt Col Brian Crothers, "Welcome to International Security Studies" (lecture, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Al., 11 Aug 2015).

³ Lt Col Brian Crothers, "Welcome to International Security Studies" (lecture, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Al., 11 Aug 2015).

⁴ Tim Harford, *Adapt: Why Success always Starts with Failure*, (New York, NY Straus and Giroux; 2011) 38-39. Harford proposes organizations adopt the following three essential steps that will enable them to adapt and overcome the complex challenges of today: Try new things, in the expectation that some will fail; to make failure survivable, because it will be common; and to make sure that you know when you have failed.

⁵ U. S. Air Force Chaplain Corps, *2015 Chaplain Corps Survey*, 1. Chaplain Costin states in the introduction, "In January, the Air Staff team will be holding an offsite to discuss where the Corps should be heading in the future and what changes should be made as soon as possible."

⁶ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid, 5.

- ¹⁰ Chris McChesney, Sean Covey, and Jim Huling, The 4 Disciplines of Execution: Achieving Your Wildly Important Goals, (New York, NY: Free Press, 2012) 32. The concept of the WIG comes from this book. McChesney describes a WIG as "a goal that can make all the difference, because it is your strategic tipping point, you're going to commit to apply a disproportionate amount of energy to it-the 20% that is not used up in the whirlwind."
- ¹¹ U. S. Air Force Chaplain Corps, *Air Force Chaplain Corps Activity Reporting System Glossary*, 8 April 2015, 9. "Chaplain Corps' WIG is a collective metric with 2 components: Component No 1. 45% or more of total hours worked are comprised of SqFWC. Component No 2. 50% (half) or more of total SqFWC is comprised of Unit and AMC engagement."
- ¹² U. S. Air Force Chaplain Corps, *2015 Chaplain Corps Survey*, 2. It is not clear why Chaplain Corps leaders considered these metrics the strategic tipping point for the Chaplain Corps and it was not known what exactly would tip when these metrics were met.

 ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Harford, *Adapt: Why Success*, 38, 144-45, 280-84. Harford recommends making failures easier to recover from by accepting that they will happen and anticipating strategic decisions will have to be changed or totally reversed. ¹⁵ HQ USAF/HCX, 2015 Chaplain Corps Survey, 5
- ¹⁶ Ch Brig Gen Steven Schaick, Deputy Chief of Chaplains, in discussion with the author, 2 Feb 2016.
- ¹⁷ U. S. Air Force Chaplain Corps, 2015 Chaplain Corps Survey, 4-5.
- ¹⁸ Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business*, (San Francisco, CA:Jossey-Bass 2012), 5, 9. Lencioni also points out that from his experience and research, "An organization that is healthy will inevitably get smarter over time because people in a healthy organization, beginning with the leaders, learn from one another, identify critical issues, and recover quickly from mistakes. Without politics and confusion getting in their way, they cycle through problems and rally around solutions much faster than their dysfunctional and political rivals do. *Moreover, they create environments in which employees do the same*" (emphasis added). ¹⁹ Ibid., 7-8.
- ²⁰ U. S. Air Force Chaplain Corps, 2015 Chaplain Corps Survey, 5.
- ²¹ Ibid., 1-5. See comments referring to communication and the terms clear, unclear, clarify, too vague, poor communication, confusion, plain English, et al.
- ²² Interview with a wing chaplain, 12 January 2016. Information obtained under conditions of nonattribution. Eleven out of the fourteen current and previously assigned wing chaplains interviewed reported this sentiment. It was exemplified by one wing chaplain in a perceived arbitrary tasking from a MAJCOM to search out an Airman who has an inspiring story, annotate that story and send it to command every month. This was seen as another burden to place upon the backs of an undermanned, fatigued and struggling chapel staff.
- ²³ Interview with a wing chaplain, 18 February 2016. Information obtained under conditions of nonattribution.
- ²⁴ Lencioni, *The Advantage*, 5.
- ²⁵ The AF as a whole fails and struggles with this. After a RIF, we often hear the phrase he or she was a good officer.
- ²⁶ George Reed, R . Craig Bullis, "The Impact of Destructive Leadership on Senior Military Officers and Civilian Employees," Armed Forces and Society 36, no 1, (2009):16-17.

 ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸William D. Hitt, *Ethics and Leadership: Putting Theory into Practice,* (Columbus, OH: Battelle Press, 1990) 15. Hitt provides another helpful list of indicators that gauge an organization's health. "1.Incongruity between the statement of organizational values and the real understanding of these values on the part of the members. 2. Incongruity between the values of one unit and those of another in the same organization. 3. Incongruity between the statement of organizational values and the behavior of the organizations leaders."
- ²⁹ Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee, Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence, (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002)233-34. Goleman points out the attempt to change a culture by only implementing training and programs/courses/training to increase the emotional intelligence of its

⁷ Charles T. Reese, "Personal Crisis of the Chaplaincy for the Chaplain," (Air Force Chaplain School Research Report No. 70B-20, USAF Chaplain School, 1970), 4.

⁹ Ch Maj Gen Dondi E. Costin, Chief of Chaplains, HQ USAF/HC, Washington DC, e-mail, subject: Three Powerful Words, 15 January 2016.

leaders without engaging the culture will fail. He asserts that an organization must implement system-wide processes if they hope to succeed. He states "Exemplary processes are multifaceted, using a bold mixture of learning techniques; they are conducted over a period of time; and they take the culture head on."

30 Joint Publication 1-05, *Religious Affairs in Joint Operations*.

³¹Lt Col Dondi E. Costin, "A Leadership Competency Model For U.S. Air Force Wing Chaplains," Research Report (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2009), 72. Chaplain Costin concludes from his research that "These data may suggest that wing chaplains are much better leaders in their own minds than is warranted by their preparation and performance. If so, wing chaplains should more carefully evaluate their performance as assessed by their subordinates, peers, and superiors." This may be one of the reasons for the proliferation of leadership failures at the wing chaplain level.

³² Roger Connors, Tom Smith, Change the Culture, Change the Game: The Breakthrough Strategy for Energizing Your Organization and Creating Accountability for Results, (New York, NY: Penguin Group Inc., 2012) 87-88. Connors points out that "Creating clarity around the Key Cultural beliefs that need to shift will help accelerate the transition to a new culture and increase the likelihood of delivering desired results." In addition, he points out that cultural beliefs will not change by "simply asking people to do it."

³³ U. S. Air Force Chaplain Corps, 2015 Chaplain Corps Survey, 1, 3. Under the third key theme on page one, "Improve Care for the Caregiver" it states "It is imperative that we enhance how we take care of one another and ensure we are revitalized so we are able to care for Airmen."

³⁴ Lencioni, *The Advantage*, 6.

³⁵ Bob Chapman, Raj Sisodia, *Everybody Matters: The Extraordinary Power of Caring for your People like Family*, (New York, NY: Penguin Random House LLC, 2015) 86 and 101. Barry-Wehmiller, led by CEO Bob Chapman, transformed their own company culture and many businesses since from unhealthy to healthy and flourishing by prefacing every strategic decision with the question, "Are we measuring success by how we touch people's (employees) lives? And in crisis are we responding like a caring family would?" They have built a successful process for maintaining organizational heath by starting with these questions.

³⁶ Harford, *Adapt: Why Success*, 152-155. Hartford suggests that organizations should focus on creating better feedback loops rather than better structures.

³⁷ When measuring results we must measure data that matters and our assumptions must be based on sound logic. Case in point, the Chaplain Corps is currently measuring compliance of chaplain corps members inputting data daily into the Air Force Chaplain Corps Activity Reporting System. Statistical evidence has shown that compliance is improving. The daily inputting of data in the program was thought to increase the accuracy in reporting. However, Chaplain Corps Survey data has indicated that the exact opposite may be occurring. The logic followed that in the older format where a 1270 form was used at the end of the month to account for and report relevant data most people pencil whipped this report and it was very inaccurate. However, there is no data to support this assumption. Compliance in reporting every day does not measure nor evaluate accuracy in reporting. It follows that if a person would fabricate data on the 1270 form (just to get it out of the way) that same person would also fabricate data daily for the same reason.

³⁸ Strategic Plan: United States Air Force Chaplain Corps, 2013.

³⁹ Marshall Goldsmith, *Triggers: Creating Behavior That Lasts--Becoming the Person You Want to Be,* (New York, NY: Penguin Random House LLC, 2015) 53-55. Goldsmith emphasizes that "our environment is a non-stop triggering mechanism whose impact on our behavior is too significant to be ignored." He also emphasize that we must shape our environment or it will control us.

⁴⁰Chapman, Everybody Matters, 83.

⁴¹ Ibid., 162. "Lean is a disciplined process of continuous improvement traditionally focused on minimizing waste and maximizing customer value."

⁴² Ibid., 161-64. Chapman points out that less than 3% of companies who attempt to apply Lean succeed. He attributes these failures to: 1. companies embracing lean only to improve profitability and quality. 2. Leaders recognize the tools but ignore the people who know how to do it better. 3. Lack patience and commitment.

⁴³ U. S. Air Force Chaplain Corps, *USAF Wing Chaplain Handbook*, 2008, xx-xxi.

⁴⁴ Will Thalheimer, "How Much Do People Forget?" (Work-Learning Research Inc., April 2010), http://www.work-learning.com/catalog.html.

⁴⁵ Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4th ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010) 236. Schein lists six primary mechanisms leaders use to embed culture and six secondary mechanisms for reinforcement

and articulation of culture. The Primary Mechanisms are: 1. What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis. 2. How leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crisis. 3. How leaders allocate resources. 4. Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching. 5. How leaders allocate rewards and status. 6. How leaders recruit, select promote, and excommunicate. The Secondary Reinforcement Mechanisms are: 1. Organizational design and structure. 2. Organizational systems and procedures. 3. Rites and rituals of the organization. 4. Design of physical space, facades, and buildings. 5. Stories about important events and people. 6. Formal statements of organizational philosophy, creeds, and charters.

- ⁴⁶ Jeffrey Pfeffer, Leadership BS: Fixing Workplaces and Careers One Truth at a Time, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2015) 185-86.
- ⁴⁷ Interview with MAJCOM Commander, 3 February 2016. Information obtained under conditions of nonattribution.
- ⁴⁸ "Breaking down silos and stovepipes in Organizations," (Select Strategy Inc. Date unknown) 1. https://selectstrategy.com/inside/whitepapers/White_Paper_Breaking_Down_Silos_or_Stovepipes_in_Organizations.pdf
- ⁴⁹ U. S. Air Force Chaplain Corps, *2015 Chaplain Corps Survey*, 1-5.
- ⁵⁰ These characteristics are also evident in other colleges under Air University.
- ⁵¹ Interview with wing chaplain, 6 March 2016. Information obtained under conditions of nonattribution. One O-6 wing chaplain expressed to me his frustration over the gaps in the curriculum at the WCC. His attempts to view the current curriculum were denied and his feedback on what would help new wing chaplains be successful was ignored.
- ⁵² Other examples of perceived silos in the USAF Chaplain Corps are assignments, deployments and recruiting which may account for the perception of a good old boy system mentioned in the 2015 Chaplain Corps Survey. Whereas the perception of a good old boy system is most likely false, actions should be taken in these organizations to increase clarity and diminish these perceptions.
- ⁵³ Stephen Losey, "New Air Force Personnel Chief: Let's break down barriers," Air Force Times, 14 Feb 2016.
- ⁵⁴ In addition, ACSC Distance learning posts many course videos on blackboard and can be downloaded by students.
- ⁵⁵ Because the actions and policies of these organizations have such a profound effect on the entire chaplain corps significant attention should be placed on deconstructing the aspects of these organizations that detract from clarity, trust and agility.
- ⁵⁶ Harford, *Adapt: Why Success*, 38-39, 283.
- ⁵⁷ These destructive leaders include both the "bull in a china shop" personality and the likeable person who fails to lead. A key issue with the vast majority of destructive or toxic leaders is low self-awareness and low emotional intelligence.
- ⁵⁸ George E. Reed, Tarnished: Toxic Leaders in the U.S. Military, (Beaverton: Ringgold Inc. 2015) 144.
- ⁵⁹ The AFCCC is using a blended learning model to accomplish education and training simultaneously. Traditionally, training provides airmen with proficiency to operate current tools, whereas education builds a foundation that prepares officers to deal with uncertain future challenges. Training gives practical manual skills that answer the "how." Education imparts the theoretical knowledge necessary to answer the "why."
- ⁶⁰ Daniel Goleman, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, YouTube, 26:37, 5 Sept 2015, online video. https://youtu.be/ZsdqBC1tHTA Goleman points out in this interview that the academic model of teaching emotional intelligence is ineffective on its own and emotionally intelligent leaders must be grown in an organization that promotes it. In addition, the person has to want to be more emotionally intelligent and recognize the area where he or she needs to grow.
- ⁶¹ Pfeffer, *Leadership BS*, 167-69. Pfeffer asserts that education and inspiration are of little value in influencing the toxic leader into caring for their people. "When leaders' own jobs and salaries depend on how well they look after others, they will do so." There is voluminous data in this book to back this assumption.
- ⁶²Joan Marques, "Understanding the Strength of Gentleness: Soft-Skilled Leadership on the Rise." Journal of Business Ethics 116, Issue 1 (August 2013): 163.
- ⁶³ Chaitra M. Hardison, et al., "360-Degree Assessments: Are They the Right Tool for the U.S. Military?" Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2015, 7. 360s are also known as multisource or multi-rater assessments. ⁶⁴ Ibid., 8. 360s are particularly useful in assessing aspects of performance that, like interpersonal skills, cannot be assessed through purely objective measures.

- ⁶⁵ Interview with MAJCOM Commander, 3 February 2016. Information obtained under conditions of nonattribution.
- ⁶⁶ William T. Eliason, "An Interview with Mark A. Welsh III" JFQ :3rd quarter, (1 July 2014) 10-11.
- ⁶⁷ Two tools used by the US Army are the Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback (MSAF) program that is offered by the Center for Army Leadership and the Army Knowledge On-Line (AKO) 360 assessment. The MSAF is a mandatory developmental tool for all US Army officers and as an optional developmental tool for its civilian and enlisted personnel.
- ⁶⁸ Email to the author
- ⁶⁹ The Strategic Leadership Feedback Program (SLFP).
- ⁷⁰ This feedback helps chaplains gain self-awareness as they compare peer feedback to how they rated themselves when they arrived at the course. This experience would give these chaplains a good opportunity to see and then work on improving their weak areas and blind spots.
- ⁷¹ U. S. Air Force Chaplain Corps, *Wing Chaplain Handbook*, iii. Now referred to as the Chaplain Corps.
- ⁷² The Senior RST is composed of the senior chaplain and senior chaplain assistant.
- ⁷³ Whereas this study is focused primarily on chaplain leadership the vast majority of the content explored is applicable to leadership development in chaplain assistants as well.
- ⁷⁴ https://msaf1.army.mil/LeadOn.aspx
- ⁷⁵ Hardison, et al., "360-Degree Assessments," iii. The results of this research suggest that using 360- feedback as part of the military performance evaluation system is not advisable at this time, though the services could benefit from using 360s as a tool for leader development and to gain an aggregate view of leadership across the force.

 ⁷⁶ Ibid., xi.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., 34. Many of those surveyed in the study surmised that if a 360 were used as an evaluation tool it could lead to distrust and have the potential to do more harm than good. There was no quantitative data in this study to support these concerns.
- ⁷⁸ This includes growth in emotional intelligence and self-awareness. Ideally, a new organization under AF/HC focused upon organizational transformation would be best to implement this endeavor.
- ⁷⁹ Costin, "A Leadership Competency Model," 29. In his study Chaplain Costin completed a "360-degree analysis of leadership competencies considered essential for wing chaplain performance" and thus laid the groundwork for this study.
- ⁸⁰ Following the establishment of this intervention a similar structure should be designed to develop and track the essential leadership competencies of junior chaplains. This tool would add clarity to the process and objective goals junior chaplains could strive to attain in preparation for greater leadership opportunities. This tool would significantly enhance a wing chaplain's ability to successfully prepare junior chaplains for greater leadership. It is also essential that wing chaplains hold junior chaplains accountable and use all means necessary to discipline, mentor and/or remove junior chaplains who are unable to reach basic competency standards.
- ⁸¹ Like many professions where superstar players make horrible coaches, the recognized skills and experiences that enable a chaplain to be selected as a wing chaplain are not the same skillsets necessary to be an effective wing chaplain.
- ⁸² If a 360 is implemented in the chaplain corps with the MAJCOM Chaplain providing the feedback, as I suggest, at the current level of mistrust in the system there would be considerable risk that it would do more harm than good. The approach I suggest will only work if there is trust between the wing chaplain and the MAJCOM chaplain.
- ⁸³ If the idea of wing chaplain's MAJCOM chaplain giving feedback on the 360 is too threatening in the Chaplain Corps' current state of poor organizational health the functional reviewer could also be a highly trained individual who provides this feedback to all wing chaplains at a set time. The point is implementing the 360 in a way that improves the process and increases organizational health.
- ⁸⁴ Chaplains can take a baseline 360 in Basic Chaplain Course and a 360 feedback could be added to deputy wing chaplain course as well.
- ⁸⁵ Hardison, et al., "360-Degree Assessments," 8.
- ⁸⁶Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*, (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002) 225-248. Fortunately many organizations have attempted to increase the health of their organizations through the methods I suggest. Goleman, in chapter 11, outlines how to create sustainable change and avoid the mistakes of others.
- ⁸⁷ Costin, Three Powerful Words.

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⁸⁸ Air Force Chaplain Corps Facebook Page, "Freedom, Faith, Ministry. Recent graduates of the Basic Chaplain Course at the Air Force Chaplain Corps College share why they became chaplains and the honor of providing spiritual care for Airmen and their families," 13 Feb 2016.

⁸⁹ Goleman, Primal Leadership, 233-34.

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